

TRUE TASTE CENTER THE PLACE FOR DESIGNATED FOOD

Florian PRIGENT¹², Felix H. ARION^{2#}

¹ *L'Ecole supérieure des Agricultures. Master of Science Food Identity, 55 Rue Rabelais, 49000 Angers, France*

² *Department of Economic Sciences, University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine of Cluj-Napoca, 3-5 Mănăştur St., 400372, Cluj-Napoca, Romania*

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Abstract

The True Taste Center is a concept I have explored as part of my Master's in Food Identity, aiming to create a direct and meaningful connection between local food producers and international consumers. Through a combination of an online platform, a physical boutique, and curated tasting events, the project highlights the cultural and human dimensions behind authentic food products from around the world. The objective is to valorize small-scale producers by giving them visibility in foreign markets, while offering consumers the opportunity to discover high-quality products with clear traceability and strong cultural roots. This research document presents a detailed analysis of the resources required to internationalize the True Taste Center, focusing on logistics, materials, equipment, communication, and visual identity. A particular emphasis is placed on creating transparency and emotional connection through storytelling, sensory experiences, and educational content that reflect the origin and uniqueness of each product. The project aligns closely with the values promoted in the Food Identity program: sustainability, authenticity, and human-scale agriculture.

Keywords: Sustainability, diversity, connections, designation, food

#Corresponding author: Felix H. ARION (felixarion@usamvcluj.ro)

INTRODUCTION

In a world where instant gratification is the norm and quality is often sacrificed for speed, food is no exception. However, this method of consumption contradicts new concerns relating to sustainability and the quality of food. Many people find it difficult to find quality products made by people who really care about what they are doing and have the necessary expertise. People are now concerned about two main topics: their health and avoiding compromising it when they eat, and climate change and, more generally, the future of the Earth. By analysing and connecting many studies, we now know that consumers are concerned about the origin of food products and sustainable production methods (Thogersen, 2023).

A study analyzing consumer behaviour in Belgium and Romania found that consumers still mainly focus on 'appearance', 'price' and 'ingredients' when recognising quality (Petrescu, Vermeir, Petrescu-Mag, 2020). While the concepts of health and sustainability are understood by most people, they are not yet the main factor in the final decision when buying food. This is closely related to social origin and income level. However, the True Taste Centre's

mission is to educate consumers on the importance of production methods for themselves and future generations. By creating a strong link between producers and consumers, we hope that information will be shared easily, and consumers' concerns will grow positively.

Another significant aspect of this decision is the level of trust that people have in the food system. The objective and mission of the True Taste Centre is to inspire confidence by providing transparent information, particularly on packaging, which is one of the main factors affecting confidence (Wu, Zhang, Van Klinken, Schrobback & Müller, 2021). This study highlights the need for traceability and security in all food systems. In the context of the True Taste Centre, it seems that labels and designations of origin are a mark of trust (Wu, Zhang, Van Klinken, Schrobback & Müller, 2021).

Regarding all these information, True Taste Center aims to be a solution of all the concerns we just saw, such as preoccupations about food consumption and trust in the food systems and to create a link between the producers and the consumers, by using simple communication channels like an application.

The idea is not just to be a food retailer, but also a place of exchange for the passionate and the professional.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

True Taste Centre is a place where people can share food and information about food and the ways of preparing it, as well as knowledge in general. However, we must not forget that as a company, True Taste Centre needs to be economically sustainable.

Collecting information is important for the future of the company. To achieve this, the use of various strategies is crucial. To measure the state of the market and the possibilities for True Taste Centre, we used the SWOT analysis method. This involves analysing the company's internal and external factors. We also used Porter's Five Forces and the Business Model Canvas.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The first analysis is the SWOT analysis (Figure 1). The aim is to conduct an internal and external analysis of the company. This will enable us to identify and try to avoid the company's negative aspects. The idea behind SWOT is to identify a company's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, and then maximise the opportunities and strengths while avoiding the weaknesses and threats.

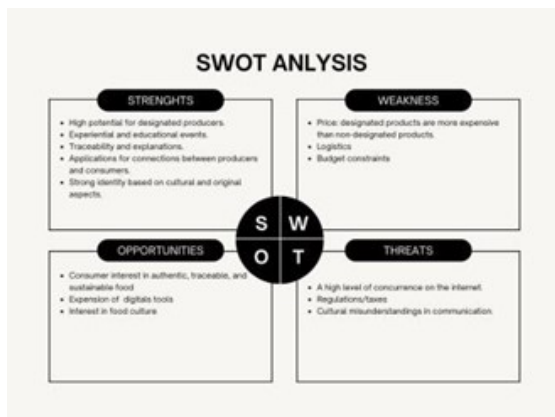


Figure 1: SWOT analysis True Taste Center

Using strengths to maximize opportunities:

The cultural identity that we are building is perfectly suited to consumers' concerns and new food trends (with a focus on sustainability and traceability). This strong identity will also be ideal for forming partnerships with various stakeholders, including producers, retailers, schools and

consumer associations. The application will be ideal for creating content that focuses on educational aspects, as well as the presentation of producers and their production methods.

Using strengths to minimize threats:

We want to use transparency and traceability to set ourselves apart from other platforms. The presentation of producers and production on the application is based on the same idea: differentiation from other platforms. Having a physical shop will help us to have different channels and reduce our dependence on online sales.

Minimize weakness by taking advantage of the opportunities:

Budget is one of the company's main concerns. The idea is to work with freelancers to reduce costs, while ensuring that brand image and communications are handled by specialists. Due to the company's sustainable approach, we may be eligible for financial support from various organisations. Partnerships with associations and local authorities would give us access to their knowledge, logistics and reputation.

Minimizing weakness by avoiding threats:

The initial stages of internationalisation will focus on one market (Europe) to ensure the efficiency of the method and the sustainability of the company. We also want to develop adaptable communication tools to allow us to be flexible in different markets and avoid misunderstandings due to cultural differences. Focusing on the European market will reduce the regulatory differences found in other markets.

The final tool we will use is Porter's five forces: This tool helps us to analyse the competitive environment of the project. It helps us to identify the risks and determinate the strategy for standing out from competitors.

- Threats of new entrants: Focusing on designated labels gives True Taste Centre a competitive advantage over those who want to enter the market. However, the barrier to entry for e-commerce is quite low, so the threat level is high.

- Power of suppliers: The company's main idea is to create strong partnerships with producers and work with them throughout the

entire process. Suppliers have limited power because they are often small-scale producers of high-quality food.

-Power of buyer: It is high. Consumers have many options within the food system in which we live. It is our role to explain these options to consumers and encourage them to adopt this type of consumption. Of course, some consumers will be loyal, but most need to be convinced.

- Threats of substitutes products: Our offer relates to specific, high-quality products. It is not easy to find products with this level of certification. However, the likelihood of finding similar certified products depends on the region. The level of threat is medium.

- Industry rivalry: Many platforms promote this type of food. We will stand out by establishing the kind of relationship we want. The risk level is medium.

us to identify the key partners we'll need and the customers who might be interested in our offering. It defines the offer and its value, as well as the channels used for communicating with customers. It is a valuable tool for creating a company, as it provides a clear overview of the necessary resources, the target audience and how to communicate with them.

The final tool we will use is Porter's five forces: This tool helps us to analyse the competitive environment of the project. It helps us to identify the risks and determinate the strategy for standing out from competitors.

- Threats of new entrants: Focusing on designated labels gives True Taste Centre a competitive advantage over those who want to enter the market. However, the barrier to entry for e-commerce is quite low, so the threat level is high.



The second material we have is the Business Model Canvas. (figure 2). This allows

CONCLUSIONS

The True Taste Centre was created to promote designated foods from around the world and to ensure sustainability and traceability. The tools we saw earlier (SWOT analysis, the Canva business model and Porter's five forces analysis) are designed to help companies develop and enter the market with all the necessary information for successful implementation. Global technologies are now sophisticated, and using

them will enable us to share our passion for food with people all over the world. By setting up this company, we are not only selling food; we are also breaking down the barriers between passionate producers and consumers who believe that it is possible to consume food more sustainably.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude to Professor Dr Felix Arion for giving us the opportunity to work on this

interesting project, and for his help and feedback throughout its realization

REFERENCES

Thorgensen, J, 2023. How does origin labelling on food packaging influence consumer product evaluation and choices? A systematic literature review. Aarhus University, School of Business and Social Sciences, Department of Management, Fuglesangs Allé 4, 8210 Aarhus V, Denmark

Petrescu, D-C., Vermeir, I., Petrescu-Mag, R-M., Consumer Understanding of Food Quality, Healthiness, and Environmental Impact: A Cross-National Perspective, *Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health* 2020, 17(1), 169

Wu, W., Zhang, A., Van Klinken, R-D., Schrobback, P., Muller, J-M., Consumer Trust in Food and the ANNEXES

Food System: A Critical Review, *Foods* 2021, 10(10), 2490Neviani, E., Gatti, M., & Lazzi, C. (2024). Development and Application of Starter Cultures. *Fermentation*, 10(10), 512. <https://doi.org/10.3390/fermentation10100512>

Precedence Research. (2024). Fermented foods market size to hit USD 394.91 billion by 2034. Retrieved from <https://www.precedenceresearch.com/fermented-foods-market>